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Notes

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ZEUS IN THE *ILIAD* AND IN THE *ODYSSEY* A CHORIZONTIC ARGUMENT

In the November number of the present volume of the *Journal* I referred to one aspect of the chorizontic argument advanced by Miss Grace Harriet Macurdy in the *Classical Quarterly*, VIII, 212 ff. In this number I shall discuss the other aspect.

Miss Macurdy thinks that she has found a real difficulty for those who believe in Homeric unity in this: "It may be argued that the name of Zeus himself occurs only half as often in the *Odyssey*. But this very recession of the Sky-God has its significance, which has never been explained away by those who advocate the single authorship." And she closes her article with these words, "The *Iliad* is essentially a northern, the *Odyssey* a Mediterranean poem."

Is it really true that Zeus in Mediterranean poetry is receding in comparison with the *Iliad*? The first Mediterranean poem about whose place of origin there can be no reasonable ground for argument is the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. How far has Zeus receded in it when compared with the *Iliad*? This poem in the edition of Rzach has 828 verses, while some form of the word Zeus is found 44 times, that is, once in about every 18 verses. I have not counted references to this god under such patronymic forms as Kronides or Kronion, but have only counted those verses in which he is mentioned by the name of Zeus. The *Iliad* has 15,693 verses, and the name of Zeus is found in the *Iliad* 468 times, that is, once in about every 34 verses. Hence the *Works and Days* contains the word "Zeus" relatively almost twice as often as the *Iliad*. This seems to me to take all the ground from under the theory that the frequency with which Zeus is named in the *Iliad* argues for a northern rather than a Mediterranean origin. The reason for the frequent mention of Zeus in the *Iliad* is so patent that I wonder how anyone could have missed it. There are so many references to Zeus in the *Iliad* because it is a war poem and Zeus is the god who gives the final decision in battle.

The Kaiser has sent scarcely a message during the present war in which he has not mentioned God, and this is true of the King and the Czar as well. It is not because these sovereigns are peculiarly religious, but this is the language of war. The ordinary events of life seem to be under our own control, and we win success by industry and by skill, or as Nestor said to his son when instructing him how to win in the chariot-race, Ψ 315:

μήτι τοι δρυτόμος μέγ' ἀμείνων ἢ βλήφιν·
μήτι δ' αὖτε κυβερνήτης ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ
νῆα θοὴν ἰθύνει ἐρεχθομένην ἀνέμοισιν·
μήτι δ' ἡνίοχος περιγίνεται ἡνίοχοιο.

In these fields success was thought to depend on human efforts and human skill, but it was Zeus alone who decided the issues of battle. The references to Zeus and his scales are too many and too full for quotation, but in these passages the skill and the power of men availed nothing when the issues had been settled by Zeus: © 69, T 224, X 209.

The *Iliad* is a war poem, and Zeus is the one god who gives victory; hence the reason for his prominence in such a poem is so evident that it does not warrant further discussion.

The farmer, above all men, is dependent on forces beyond his control, he cannot by skill or by industry bring on the rains or keep off the frost; "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." As a result of this feeling of man's dependence on God's favor for harvests we have our national day of Thanksgiving, in which the people are called upon to render thanks to God for his bounty to the farmer.

It is just in these two realms, war and agriculture, that we always feel our dependence upon an overruling divine power, and thus we have so many references to Zeus as the supreme deity in the *Iliad* and in the *Works and Days*.

The power of Zeus has in no way receded in the *Odyssey*, but a large part of that poem is taken up with events which are commonly regarded as being under human control. It was Zeus who sent Athena to Ithaca in order to inspire Telemachus, and it was he who sent Hermes to Calypso with orders for the immediate release of Odysseus, and he who wrecked the ship and slew the companions of Odysseus in compliance with the prayer of Helios; he also permitted Poseidon to destroy the returning ship of the Phaeacians. Zeus it was who thundered in answer to the prayer of Odysseus for some favoring sign, and then the hero exclaimed, υ 112;

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ὅς τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισιν ἀνάσσεις.

This verse does not give the impression that Zeus had receded very far. When Odysseus tested his bow, Zeus thundered again as a sign of help and approval, while the poem closes, as it had begun, with this same god once more sending Athena to Ithaca. Everywhere in the *Odyssey* Zeus is the supreme deity, and everything depends upon his will.

He is less frequently named in this poem than he is in the *Iliad* and the *Works and Days* because many of the scenes of the *Odyssey* have to do with matters which lie, by common consent, under human control, while war and harvests are universally regarded as peculiarly dependent on divine favor. All this is as true now as it was in Greece in the time of Homer and Hesiod, so that the most cursory reading of the daily paper will explain away this seeming contradiction between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

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